



Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • www.scdhec.gov

Monitoring Air Toxics at Chicora Elementary School

Why are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) monitoring for air toxics in my community?

As part of our ongoing efforts to monitor and improve air quality, DHEC is partnering with EPA to monitor the air around Chicora Elementary School and the surrounding community. We are measuring the amounts of toxic pollutants found in the air to see if the levels could be unsafe for the health of the children, staff, and nearby residents. Chicora Elementary was chosen for the study because it is located near a variety of pollution sources – cars, trucks, and buses on the highway and interstate, fueling stations, dry cleaners, and large industries. Children's health is a priority, and DHEC and EPA are working together to make sure school environments are safe and healthy. This is part of EPA's nationwide study of the environmental impacts on children's health.

What are air toxics?

Air toxics are pollutants that are known or suspected to cause serious health effects when certain amounts are inhaled over time. Air toxics are found in automobile exhaust, gasoline vapors, and emissions from some dry cleaners, printing shops, and large industrial plants.

What is being monitored and where?

DHEC and EPA are monitoring the air quality in the communities around Chicora Elementary. In addition to the school, monitors are set up on Jenkins Avenue and in the Howard Heights community. We will be looking at all pollutants found in the samples, but we'll be focusing on these specific air toxics:

- Benzene, acrolein, and formaldehyde, which are typically found in emissions from service stations, automobiles, and tobacco smoke; and
- Manganese, nickel, and chromium (VI), which are typically found in emissions from manufacturing facilities, incinerators, and power plants.

When will the monitoring take place?

The study at Chicora Elementary began on July 18, 2009, and will consist of at least ten samples taken over at least 60 days. We will continue to monitor air toxics in the area as long as we need in order to determine how the air quality is affecting the children and residents of the surrounding community.

What will happen with the results?

You will be able to see the initial results of the monitoring on our website (www.scdhec.gov/baq) about 4 to 6 weeks after the monitoring began. We will hold meetings to explain the process and initial results with the community. Once we have analyzed the results, we will work with community leaders to address any concerns and keep the community informed.

How can I get more information?

For specific questions about the air toxics monitoring project, contact Henry Porter at porterhj@dhec.sc.gov or at 803-898-4138. Or, for general air quality questions, call your local DHEC office at 953-0150.